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ABSTRACT

The Learn-Ed Nations Inventory was designed by a panel of American Indian and Alaska Native master educators to determine how and to what extent a school is serving Native students and supporting their needs. The inventory encompasses all factors impinging on students, both directly and indirectly. Nine key school areas were identified to be inventoried: (1) visioning, planning, and school improvement; (2) administrative leadership; (3) parents and community; (4) school-wide behavioral climate and policies; (5) instructional practices; (6) assessment; (7) professional development; (8) facilities; and (9) resources. For each area, indicators are presented and are to be rated on a continuum from significant to not present or not applicable. Space is provided to note the specific evidence used to gauge each indicator. This is a useful feature because if questions arise, those involved can refer to these sources again for clarification or to determine whether the source of evidence was adequate. There is space provided in each area for descriptions of strengths and areas needing improvement. Once the information is gathered, it is intended that the school community engage all stakeholders in a dialogue to share opinions, achieve a deeper understanding of the issues, and determine whether they are traveling along or straying from the improvement path for American Indian and Alaska Native students. Resources include 98 print materials and 28 web sites. The inventory forms are included. (TD)

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ED 463 913

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory

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A Tool for Improving Schools With **American Indian** and **Alaska Native Students**

RC 023445

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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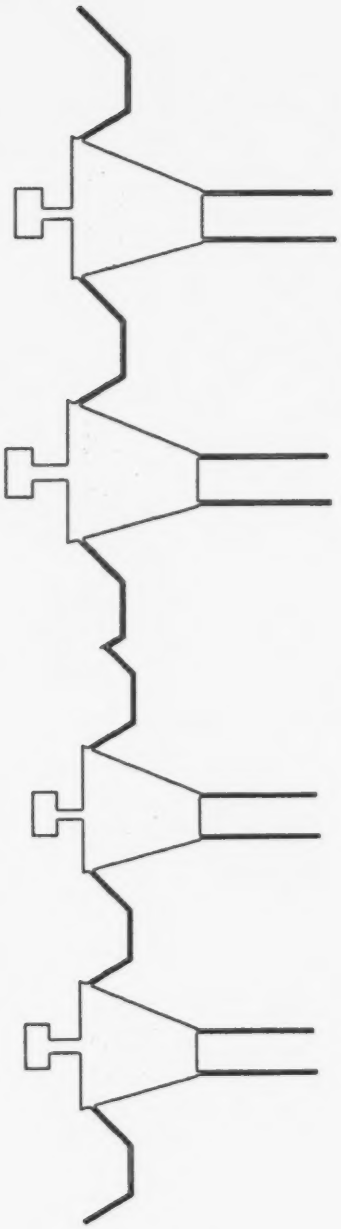

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Cover photo: Nez Perze tribal member Gloria Greene and her son, Matthew Greene, in dancing regalia Talen near Lapwai, Idaho, August, 1990.

Photo by Thomas Harvey

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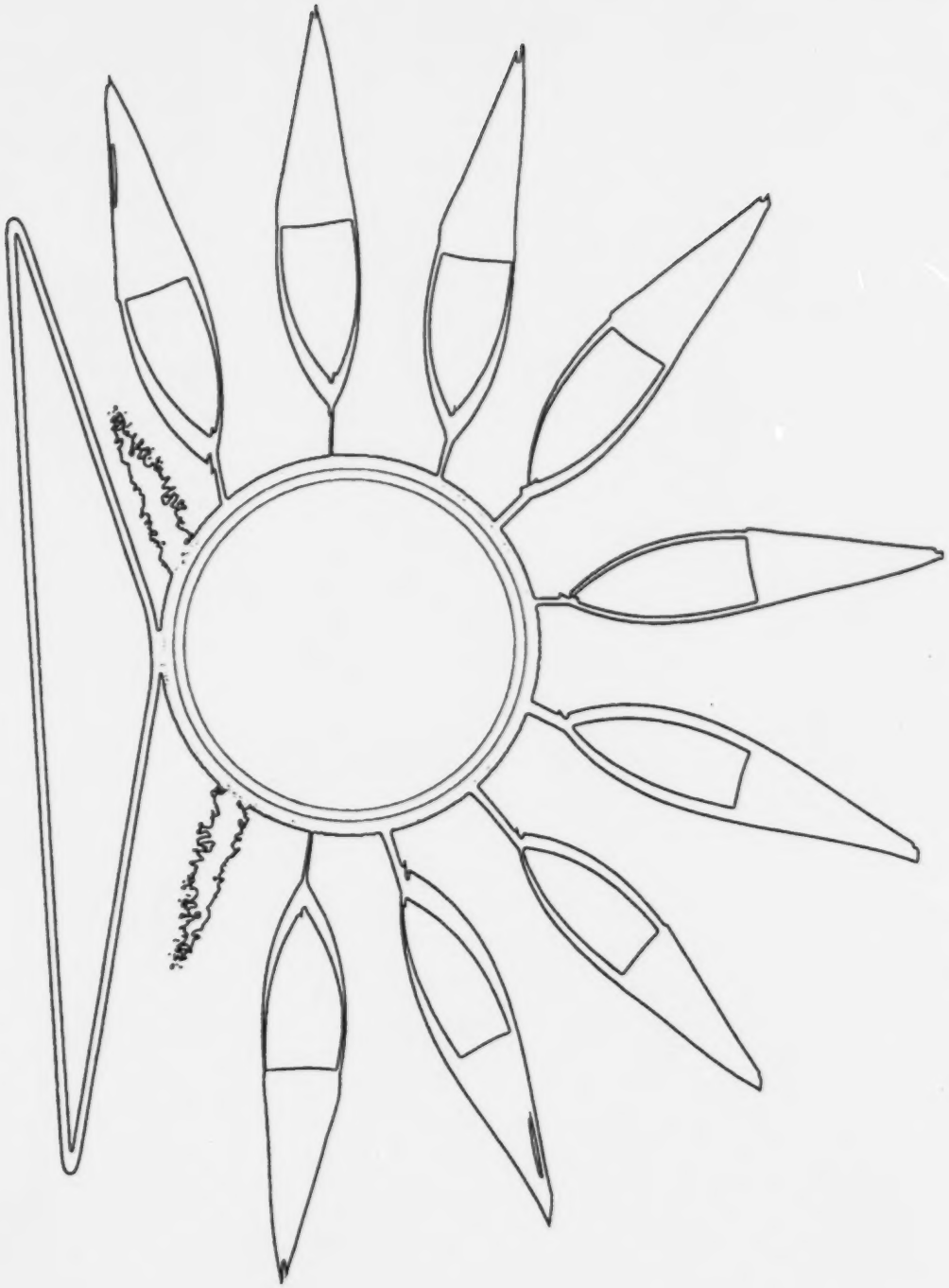
A Tool for Improving Schools With
American Indian and
Alaska Native Students

January 2002



Contents

Foreword v

Introduction 1

The Learn-Ed Nations Inventory 7

Next Steps After the Inventory 31

References 35

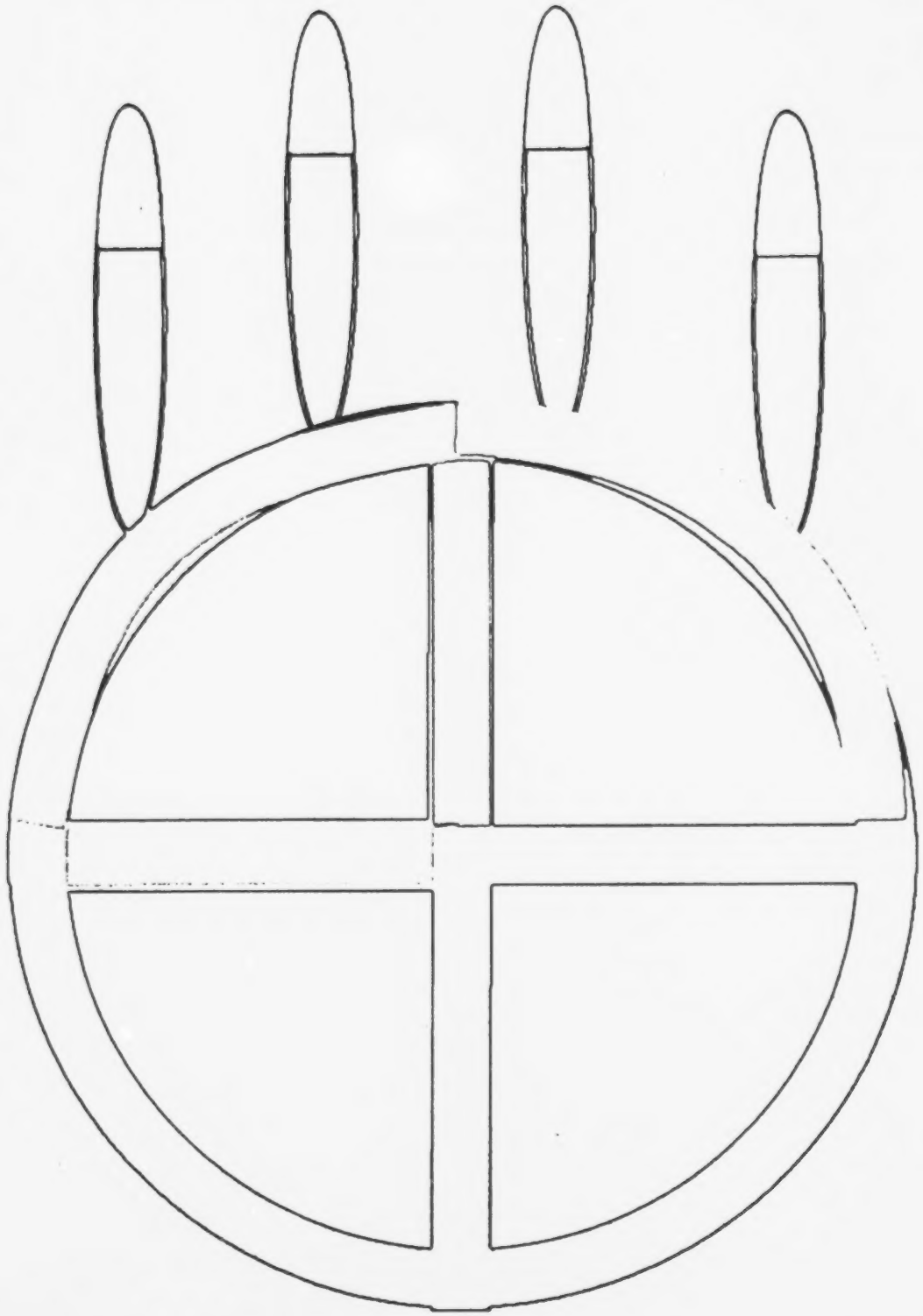
Resources 37

What do we mean by Learn-Ed Nations?

We've used a play on words in the title of this booklet.

The word "*learn*" and the abbreviated "*ed*" used often in common speaking for education are connected with a hyphen. By "*Learn-Ed*" we mean learned or knowledgeable about education.

"*Nations*" in the plural refers to the United States and the American Indian/Alaska Native tribal nations that exist in a special relation of sovereignty separate from the United States. Many of the students we aim to serve through this booklet are citizens of Indian nations as well as the U.S. By saying "*nations*," we honor the dual nature of these students' lives and call for both tribal and U.S. realms to become learned about the educational needs of children who live in both worlds.



Foreword

It has been my great privilege to live in and work with Native American communities. As a European American, I have encountered distinctly different worldviews that test assumptions about Western civilization and public education. The cultural differences are subtle, yet profound for how we conduct ourselves in schools and communities. Since *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, there has been renewed belief that all children can and will learn challenging subject matter. Yet, fewer American Indian and Alaska Native students are achieving proficiency than their counterparts. Why should this be so?

Clues are found when I reflect on my own experiences working with Native American educators. A T'Chinook man introduces himself by saying, "Before I speak, I have something to say," and then commences to recite his lineage back to the treaty signing with Isaac Stevens, territorial governor of Washington. A Northern Cheyenne educator closes his letters with the expression, "all my relations." A Turtle Mountain woman teases me that it's a shame that European Americans are such "human-doings" rather than human-beings. A Umatilla veteran expresses his patriotism as "the opportunity to bring honor to my people." A Coeur d'Alene woman laments that "when you fail an Indian child, you are failing my people." What could these things mean, particularly for educators in schools serving Native American students?

Often, in spite of best intentions, some educators don't get it. Native American people do not necessarily want to become European Americans, and they don't want European Americans to become Native American. This is a simple idea that somehow gets lost in our well-intended cultural relativism.

Our cultures and worldviews are not the same. European American society values individual achievement over the common good. The American Declaration of Independence reflects a European-influenced tension between "the commonwealth" and individual rights "to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Traditional Native American and Alaska Native people are more linked intergenerationally to families and communities. Social obligations go far beyond individual achievements and family honor. Each individual is inextricably linked to the community destiny.

Schools need to respect the special, sovereign status of Native peoples in the United States. American Indian and Alaska Native communities have special, recognized, government-to-government relationships that uniquely provide for "nations within nations." Native communities strive for self-determination through social and economic self-sufficiency. In the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere, they depend on modern advances in fisheries, forestry, and other natural resources, as well as law, medicine, technology, and commerce. Native communities today recognize public education as key to self-determination because education enables Native people to capitalize on Western society's innovations and technology to pursue their own community, social, and economic goals. American schools don't always understand or respect that Native children have the right to pursue their education within the context of self-determination.

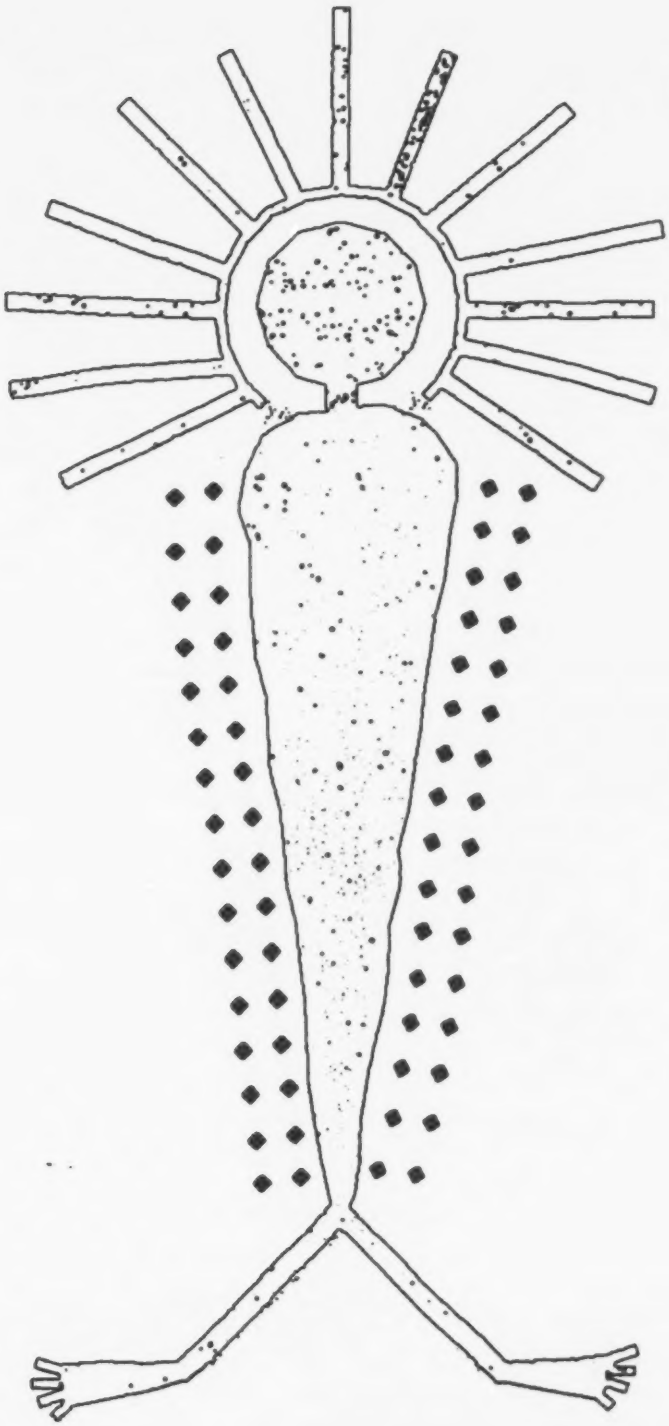
In Native society, people have differentiated community roles. Drawing attention to oneself creates ill will. Pacific Northwest legends frequently moralize upon Coyote or Raven for their self-centered vanity. When

a school focuses attention on an individual Native American child, the attention may be embarrassing for her, her family, and her community. Yet, Native American children are encouraged by their communities to be quietly independent and self-assured. Very young students are responsible for their own well-being in the home, yet in school are treated as "children."

The differences described confuse both schools and students. Schools that fail to acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of their American Indian and Alaska Native students create barriers to their success, sometimes unknowingly. School communities—staff, parents, students, and the community—need to be more aware of how they are and are not meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students in their school. That is the purpose for the school inventory tool provided in this booklet. With knowledge about how a school is doing in various areas that influence student learning, a school community can move forward to create a more inclusive environment for American Indian and Alaska Native students and so create more opportunities for all the students to succeed.

I would like to dedicate this guide to the memory of Joseph Coburn, former director of the NWREL Research and Development Program for Indian Education, who spent his life improving educational opportunities for Native American people. Many people sought him out to learn "Coburn's 10 easy steps to effective Indian education." Joe would begin with his wry Klamath wit, "Step one, learn the 100 hard steps!" We urge you to follow in Joe's path.

Steve Nelson
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2002



Introduction

In 1985, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) published a set of three guides titled *Effective Practices in Indian Education* (Butterfield; Pepper; Pepper & Nelson). Joseph Coburn, then director of the NWREL Research and Development Program for Indian Education, guided this work. At that time, the "effective schools" research that began in the 1970s had identified school and classroom practices that were present in successful schools and, absent in less successful ones. However, the educational research focused on students in general, and had only limited application to American Indian students. Research on American Indian and Alaska Native learners was quite limited and, more important, the vast majority of American Indian students attended public schools in classrooms with non-Indian students and non-Indian teachers. There was a need for knowledge about effective practices for these students.

A panel of American Indian master teachers was convened to translate the educational research of that era into classroom practices effective with Indian students. The *Effective Practices in Indian Education* guides recorded that important practitioner knowledge. For years, the guides have been widely used throughout the Pacific Northwest for the professional development of teachers, curriculum coordinators, and administrators working in schools on or near reservations.

After 16 years, however, the monographs have become dated in their organization and approach. References to

standards and performance assessments—prominent concerns in education today—are conspicuous by their absence. Targeted supplemental programs that unintentionally misdirected Title IX to handle "the special educational and culturally related academic needs of Native American students" are being reconfigured as heterogeneous, schoolwide programs. Thinking now focuses on whole-system comprehensive school reform, eclipsing the atomistic view of "fixing the pieces one at a time" found in the earlier guides. The time had arrived to recreate and update the effective practices guides, reflecting new thinking and a new educational research base.[1]

A New Approach Evolves

In August 2001, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory reconvened a panel of master American Indian and Alaska Native educators. Among the group that met with Laboratory staff were the following practitioners:

- Julie Cajune, Indian Education Director, Ronan School District, Polson, Montana (Confederated Salish and Kootenai enrolled member)
- Mark Hiratsuka, Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Region School District, Dillingham, Alaska (Yup'ik)
- Claire Manning-Dick, School Counselor, Owyhee Combined School, Owyhee, Nevada (Shoshone-Paiute)
- Donna Houtz-McArthur, Indian Education Coordinator, Blackfoot School District #55, Blackfoot, Idaho (Shoshone-Bannock)
- Dr. Chris Meyer, Reading/Curriculum Specialist, Plummer, Idaho (Coeur d'Alene)
- Arthur Ochoa, Principal, Lost River Schools, Klamath County School District, Merrill, Oregon (Klamath)

While several of these individuals had participated in the original development work, their profession had taken them much further. They are now principals,

[1]For more about Title IX evolution, see Clark (1999).

superintendents, teacher educators, counselors, and tribal education officials. The thinking in this group, as in the field of education, had advanced from desiring "cookbook recipes" to wanting "nutrition guides." Our panelists pointed out that research can demonstrate what is known, but only expert knowledge taken in the context of specific schools and communities can demonstrate what is done and needs to be done. As a starting point, the panel examined and discussed a wide range of current publications concerning effective schooling practices for American Indian and Alaska Native students. Their purpose was to reckon the understandings found in "book knowledge" with their considerable experience working with these students—what they know works from years of their own schooling and practice in schools.

The deep and thoughtful discussion quickly advanced to the central issues of improving educational opportunities for these students. The panelists determined that the charge today is for all educators throughout the system to advocate for and organize resources to serve the best interests of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. They noted that public education begins with a dialogue between the school and the (public) community. They emphasized that leadership within schools and classrooms can create an environment in which Indian students are not viewed in terms of majority cultural stereotypes (for example, as "villains" or "victims"). The panelists also stressed that every student, school, and community is unique, making local cultural context essential to school reform.

At the core, panelists advocated for a systemic, integrated approach and set forth the following:

- Deep support from the local community is central to undertaking educational improvement. Improvements are made for the community's public school, its children, and its social infrastructure.

- By themselves, all the effective classroom practices available won't improve schools and opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native learners. Unless system and community resources are committed to support quality education, little will change; it takes funding.

- Leadership in its many forms—community, school board, administration, principals, and school team members—is also essential for creating a culture of renewal and continuous improvement.

- All the scientifically rigorous research and well-validated tools will not improve school systems unless thoughtful and open dialogue is focused upon understanding, valuing, and committing to school improvement as a community.

The practitioner panelists celebrated the growing self-determination of Native peoples. They stated emphatically that they want any new tools created to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students toward self-realization within their tribal communities, which themselves are pursuing self-determination. With their eyes on these core elements over the course of the weeklong discussion, the panelists ultimately determined to set the original monographs aside, rather than revise them. Then, they embarked on a profoundly different strategy. Their perceptions led them beyond the practices needed in the classroom to a broader focus that includes the school district and community in trusting relationship.[1]

A New Tool To Assist School Communities

The panel of practitioner experts counseled that many school communities first need to examine how they are doing currently in relation to American Indian and

[1]It is vital that the education community be aware that trust and self-determination are critical areas of concern to Native communities. North American tribal peoples' historical experiences are fraught with broken treaties and policies that include eradication or assimilation. For this history in brief, see Allen, T., & Fox, S. (1995).

Alaska Native students. If a school community captures this evidence, it can have a collective sense of how well the school is doing. From this point, the group can better determine needs, set priorities, and devise a plan for effective, integrated action to help their students. The Indian/Alaska Native practitioners decided the first resource that should be devised is a comprehensive inventory of indicators for the school community environment. The inventory is an appropriate tool for the school and community to gather baseline data—that is, how are they doing now? They can then use that information to chart a course for the future. The tool that has resulted, the Learn-Ed Nations Inventory, follows on Pages 7–29. (Copies of the Inventory forms are also in the back pocket, ready for duplication.)

In a limited way, NWREL staff and the panelists proceeded through the fall of 2001 to develop and pilot an inventory that schools could use.[3] There was a desire to support schools further by providing up-to-date educational research—both mainstream and Native student-focused research—that would give school communities access to current thinking about educational improvement and best practices. Thus, a list of references and resources, each keyed to indicators identified in the inventory, was compiled with input from Indian and Alaska Native educators and expert researchers. This keyed list follows the inventory as the Resources section, beginning on Page 37.

Because the convening practitioners want the inventory tool to be broad enough to encompass all factors impinging on students, both directly and indirectly, they identified nine key school areas to inventory:

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[3]The practitioner panelists returned to their schools or districts and either piloted the inventory with staff or community constituents or discussed the document with selected members of their school communities. In addition, during the fall of 2001, NWREL staff and the practitioner panelists convened a session at the National Indian Education Association annual meeting, where the draft inventory was distributed to 72 participants for discussion; a follow-up mailing soliciting feedback was sent to all session attendees.

I. Visioning, Planning, and School Improvement
II. Administrative Leadership
III. Parents and Community
IV. Schoolwide Behavioral Climate and Policies
V. Instructional Practices
VI. Assessment
VII. Professional Development
VIII. Facilities
IX. Resources

The areas are far-ranging and include some activities that are distant from individual students' daily lives. For example, the area of Visioning, Planning, and School Improvement is a general area that will affect the entire school. On the other hand, the area of Instructional Practices will have a clear impact on students every day. The practitioners underscored that schools need to be consciously concerned with all these areas and the indicators within each area if they wish to improve learning success for all students. Research supporting this approach is documented in the Resources section, beginning on Page 37.

Inventory

The Learn-Ed Nations Inventory

The Learn-Ed Nations Inventory is designed to determine how and to what extent your school is serving American Indian and Alaska Native students and supporting their needs. It is a tool based on tangible evidence. Those who administer the inventory look for specific ways the school demonstrates it is meeting the indicators. In addition, the inventory includes a continuum of ranking so that the school community can assess its general performance for each indicator. The inventory is a flexible tool; a school may use the inventory in its entirety or may have a group of school stakeholders address inventory sections that relate to current areas of concern. The inventory may also be used within a school periodically to document progress or to refocus improvement efforts. And, schools may refashion or customize the tool to meet their specific needs.[4]

How To Use the Inventory

Who should be involved in the Learn-Ed Nations inventory process at a school? The answer lies in a school's reasons for initiating the inventory or, perhaps,

[4]As another approach to an inventory focusing on support to Native students, see Allen, T., & Fox, S. (1995), pp. 15–45. There is also useful information to guide the inventory process in Yap, K., Aldersebaes, I., Railsback, J., & Speth, T. (2000).

a school community's level of experience and comfort with collecting and analyzing the data. These factors should influence and lead to involving particular staff members/staff roles, district specialists, community or tribal members or leaders, students, or parents.

School leaders should think carefully about who should coordinate and carry out the inventory project. Schools should look for participants for the inventory process within and beyond the school walls and should consider students as participants in the process when appropriate. Some of the questions below might help your school define its current purpose for the inventory and determine who should conduct the effort:

- *Why is our school conducting the Learn-Ed Nations Inventory at the present time?*
- *Are there people who can provide leadership and expertise about the topics or concerns that interest us?*
- *Are there people with experience or expertise who can lead us in how to conduct the inventory process?*
- *Who are the stakeholders in our school community who most need to understand how and to what extent we are meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students?*
- *Who can provide information about the specific evidence we need to collect for indicators we will be examining?*
- *Which people possess the various skills needed to coordinate and conduct the actual inventory?*
- *Who can compile the data we collect and help us interpret our results?*
- *Once we know our current situation and areas where we need to focus more attention, who can help lead us to set priorities and move forward?*

School leaders should also consider how the Learn-Ed Nations Inventory will be integrated into the life of their school's planning and improvement processes. The way the Learn-Ed Nations Inventory project is situated will influence the support gathered for the activity, the quality of the information collected, and the ability to follow up and take appropriate steps. It may be easiest to work through an existing school commit-

tee or team. Or, depending on the school's needs, it may be worthwhile to create an altogether new task force to incorporate key constituents or give the project greater emphasis. The school site council might be an appropriate context for the Learn-Ed Nations Inventory because it incorporates a range of school stakeholders. Execution of the inventory could be by small teams drawn from a range of school and community roles and sectors. Small teams may be composed of like or mixed groups. Often new insights come from those who are unfamiliar with an area about which they gather information.

Those involved in collecting information for the inventory will need to think carefully about what data sources related to each indicator will inform the inventory. It is important for those organizing the inventory to provide inventory teams with the access and support they need to gather evidence and make valid judgments. The best format for evidence sources will vary, depending on the indicator being inventoried. Policy documents and reports are likely sources for Area I, Visioning, Planning, and School Improvement. Interviews or focus groups might be a better source for indicators concerning the parent and community issues in Area III, Parents and Community. Classroom observations, curriculum materials, and student work samples may be key evidence sources for Area V, Instructional Practices. Inventory teams should cite their sources of specific evidence carefully. If questions arise, those involved can refer to these sources again for clarification or to determine whether the source for evidence is adequate. Project leaders should ensure this aspect of the inventory work is done to a suitable standard. A school may wish to conduct brief inventory team training or create simple forms or cards that inventory team members can use to record their sources, any remarks about them, and how to locate sources again if needed.

To fill out the inventory forms, the team will mark the appropriate response for each indicator in one of four columns:

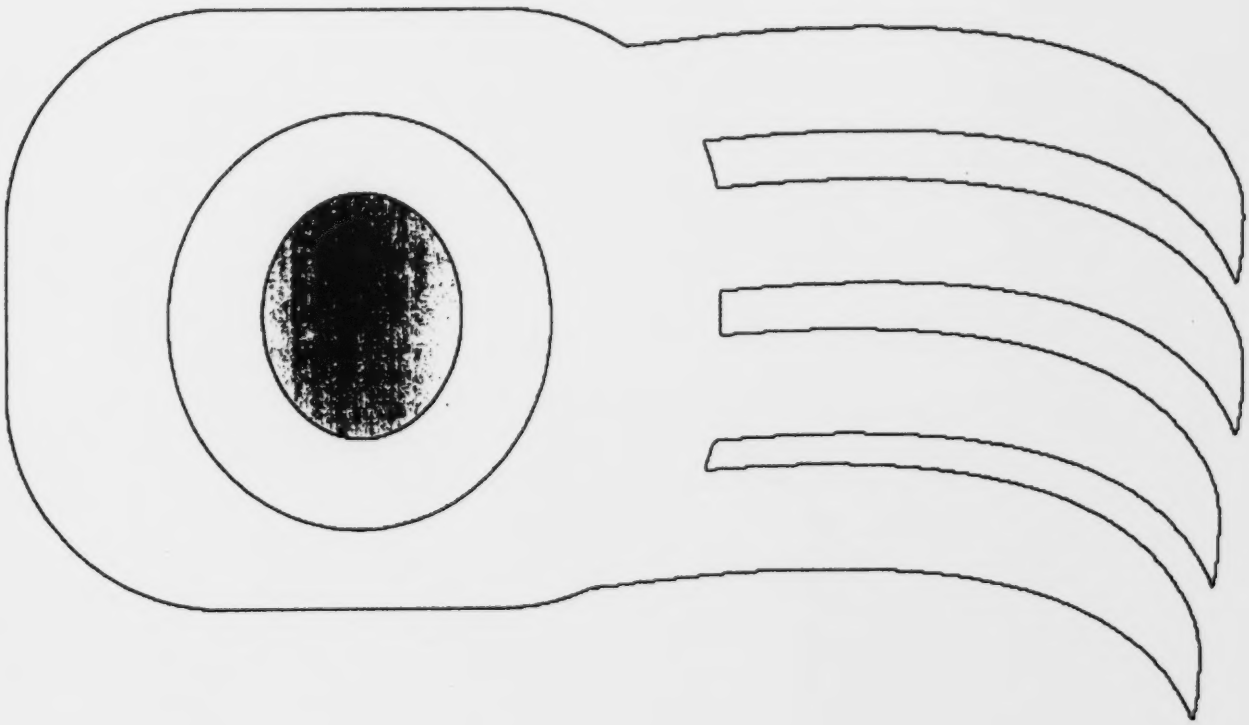
- **Significant.** Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
- **Developing.** Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
- **Not Present.** No evidence of this indicator can be found in the school.
- **NA (not applicable).** The indicator is not relevant to the school or the inventory being taken at this time.

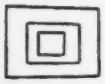
In the far righthand column of the form, inventory takers simply note the specific evidence they used to gauge each indicator's presence in the school. This is a useful category, because it provides a check on whether the team considered all key evidence when gauging the school's performance. Examples of specific evidence might be a written school suspension policy, a school improvement plan document, or a schoolwide mission statement.

During the inventory process, inventory takers are likely to come up with questions or concerns that are important to note. Space is reserved on the bottom of inventory forms for writing in any concerns or questions about an area. These questions or concerns may be relevant to pursue when a small group compiles and analyzes results or a larger stakeholder group discusses inventory results. The questions or comments can form a useful foundation for beginning a school dialogue about inventory results, an important follow-up step once data are compiled.

Learned-Ed Nations Inventory forms may be easily duplicated. Forms should be made available to all individuals involved in various phases of the inventory activity. Depending on how the school wishes to conduct the inventory, results may be turned in on individually completed forms. Another option is for teams to work together on the survey or parts of it and a team could hand in one completed "team" form. Or, team members could fill out individual forms and these could

be compiled at either the team or whole-group level. A school community needs to set priorities among the kinds of data it wishes to collect. For example, is it more important to separate the data by demographic groups or individual students, or to gather and analyze whole-group data? Often, it is important for a school to have inventories filled out by individuals because this can inform school dialogue and understanding. It is often the case that individual school stakeholders from different arenas view things differently.





Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area I: Visioning, Planning, and School Improvement

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. All stakeholders feel included in visioning/ planning/school improvement processes					
2. Vision and improvement plans are culturally inclusive of all					
3. Processes and decisionmaking are understood and accessible to all stakeholders					
4. Sound research and practice inform improvement planning					
5. School improvement is a continuous process					
6. Improvement is linked to:					
• State educational infrastructures					
• District educational infrastructures					
• Education professions					
• Parents					
• Community					
• Students					
Other indicator 7.					

More on next page

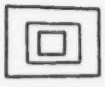
Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
Developing: Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
Not Present: No evidence of this indicator can be found in the school.
NA (not applicable): The indicator is not relevant to the school or the inventory being taken at this time.

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area I: Visioning, Planning, and School Improvement (continued)

Describe our strengths in Area I:

Describe points for our improvement in Area I:



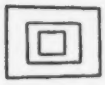
Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area II: Administrative Leadership

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Leadership teams exist at all levels (district, school, parent/community, teaching/instructional, student)					
2. Across the entire school community, there are high expectations for leaders and culturally appropriate leadership					
3. Policies are in place to create educational context inclusive of American Indian and Alaska Native people and relevant to American Indian and Alaska Native learners					
4. Leadership teams are collaborative and empowered					
5. Leadership development opportunities are provided at all levels to ensure effectiveness					
Other indicator 6.					

More on next page

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
Developing: Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
Not Present: No evidence of this indicator can be found in the school.
NA (not applicable): The indicator is not relevant to the school or the inventory being taken at this time.



Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area II: Administrative Leadership (continued)

Describe our strengths in Area II:

Describe points for our improvement in Area II:

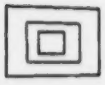
Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area III: Parents and Community

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Communication is two-way, frequent, respectful					
2. Parents and community are represented in school leadership structures (school committees, site council)					
3. Parents and community members are involved in meaningful ways (their perspectives, knowledge are sought and utilized)					
4. School/staff communicate to parents/ community members that they needn't be highly schooled for students' learning to benefit					
5. Parents and community members acknowledge they play important roles in creating and sustaining a quality, culturally responsive learning process/environment at school, at home, and in the community					
6. Vigorous outreach activities are conducted to inspire and increase parent/community involvement					
7. The community is a source for "real world" (authentic) learning experiences for students					
Other indicator 8.					

More on next page

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
Developing: Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
Not Present: No evidence of this indicator can be found in the school.
NA (not applicable): The indicator is not relevant to the school or the inventory being taken at this time.



Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area III: Parents and Community (continued)

Describe our strengths in Area III:

Describe points for our improvement in Area III:

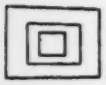
Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area IV: Schoolwide Behavioral Climate and Policies

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Stakeholders are included in processes for determining and periodically reviewing policies and procedures					
2. Policies for students in school are culturally appropriate					
3. There is consistent and fair application of rules throughout the school					
4. Rules and consequences are clear and accessible to all in the school and community					
5. Strategies aimed at preventing behavioral problems and intervention practices exist					
6. Students are included/have a voice in establishing policies and sanctions					
7. Behavioral policies and procedures are administered with respect for all students					
Other indicator 8.					

More on next page

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
Developing: Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
Not Present: No evidence of this indicator can be found in the school.
NA (not applicable): The indicator is not relevant to the school or the inventory being taken at this time.



Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area IV: Schoolwide Behavioral Climate and Policies (continued)

Describe our strengths in Area IV:

Describe points for our improvement in Area IV:

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area V: Instructional Practices

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Instruction is based on quality research and procedural knowledge					
2. Instruction builds higher-order thinking skills and focuses on meaning as well as the acquisition of facts					
3. Local ways of knowing and teaching are incorporated into instruction					
4. Instructional practices promote use and preservation of American Indian and Alaska Native languages and knowledge					
5. Technology is used to provide access to additional instructional and learning resources					
6. Relationships with learners are respectful and promote respect among students					
7. Instruction is supported through training and resources					
8. Reflection about instructional practice is standard for teachers and learners					
9. Instruction is aligned to students' varied learning styles (for example, there are real-world, inquiry-based, experiential, and cooperative learning opportunities)					

More on next page

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Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area V: Instructional Practices *(continued)*

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
10. Practices foster development of self-directed learning					
11. Practices promote family and community interaction and involvement					
12. Instructional practices value diversity as a positive attribute					
13. Practices develop student accountability and resiliency					
14. Instruction is based on high expectations for all learners (all students have access to rigorous coursework)					
15. Instruction is aligned with the curriculum and with state and national standards					
Other indicator 16.					

Describe our strengths in Area V:

Describe points for our improvement in Area V:

Please use another sheet of paper if necessary

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
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Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VI: Assessment

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Assessments are aligned with curriculum, instruction, and standards					
2. Assessment instruments are reviewed for cultural bias					
3. Test item content includes locally meaningful elements (clothing, vocabulary, lore, food traditions, community roles, etc.)					
4. Assessments are frequent and allow for adjustments, interventions					
5. Various methods of assessment are utilized to accommodate individual and cultural learning styles					
6. Assessments are used as formative learning tools to improve instruction and student performance					
7. Students are taught the criteria used to assess their work to strengthen self-assessment skills					
8. Dropout rates are included as accountability measures					
Other indicator 9.					

More on next page

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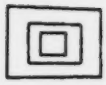

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VI: Assessment
(continued)

Describe our strengths in Area VI:

Describe points for our improvement in Area VI:

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VII: Professional Development

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Professional development is relevant to current school learning needs and priorities					
2. Staff development is culturally informed and reflects best available research on teaching and learning					
3. Professional development activities are congruent with adult learning theory about what works for adult learning					
4. Input from school staff is used to determine professional development, and local expertise is used to design activities					
5. The spirit of dialogue and continuous learning is promoted and supports a learning community (for example, staff have opportunities for guided and independent practice with new instructional methods and opportunities to debrief initial trials with one another)					
6. The school community (support staff, parents, community members, students, teachers, administrators) is included in professional development					
7. The professional development is aligned with school reform efforts to have a favorable impact on learners					
Other indicator 8.					

More on next page

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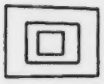

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VII: Professional Development (continued)

Describe our strengths in Area VII:

Describe points for our improvement in Area VII:

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VIII: Facilities

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Facilities reflect and are compatible with the local physical environment and culture(s) represented in the school					
2. Facilities are accessible and inviting for local people to utilize					
3. The physical plant is valued within the community as a factor contributing to learning					
4. The community takes an active stewardship role for maintaining the facilities, ensuring that they are clean and in good repair					
5. The school is decorated with student art/ projects and shows pride in their accomplishments					
Other indicator 6.					

More on next page

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
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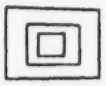

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area VIII: Facilities
(continued)

Describe our strengths in Area VIII:

Describe points for our improvement in Area VIII:

Learn-Ed Nations Inventory Form

Area IX: Resources

Indicator	Significant	Developing	Not Present	NA	Specific Evidence
1. Allocations reflect school vision					
2. Budgeting and allocation processes are disclosed					
3. Decisionmakers are acting in the best interests of students					
Other indicator 4.					

Describe our strengths in Area IX:

Describe points for our improvement in Area IX:

Significant: Evidence shows that the school enacts an indicator effectively and integrates it fully into the life of the school.
Developing: Evidence shows that the indicator is visible in part (or that only a portion of the school exhibits the indicator if that indicator is relevant to all school programs and practices).
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Next Steps

Next Steps After the Inventory

The Learn-Ed Nations Inventory is designed to be used as a tool for gathering information about your school's environment, and then for objectively sharing individual perspectives and encouraging dialogue among a school's stakeholders (i.e., parents, staff, community members, and students).

Dialogue as a Next Step

Research tells us that good dialogue encourages group members to work together to help each other form new understandings and shared meanings. Peter Senge and associates (2000) describe dialogue as one of the most effective practices for team learning:

(P)eople learn how to think together—not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge but in the sense of occupying a collective responsibility, in which thoughts, emotions, and resulting actions belong not to just one individual, but all of them together (p. 75).

The participants in the dialogue sessions should be a representative group, facilitated by a leader who can provide a safe climate for openness, and encourage participants to listen, to share their opinions, and to move into a deeper understanding of the issues.

According to Ann Dinsmoor Case (1994), dialogue is characterized by:

- Suspending judgment
- Examining our own work without defensiveness
- Exposing our reasoning and looking for limits to it
- Communicating our underlying assumptions
- Exploring viewpoints more broadly and deeply
- Being open to data that contradict our assumptions
- Approaching someone who sees a problem differently, not as an adversary, but as a colleague in common pursuit of a better solution

The key to beginning the dialogue is asking questions. For example: "What are the strengths of our school?" "What are some of our key challenges?" The facilitator's role is to draw out the reasons for and implications of the inventory data, and to probe beneath the surface for evidence, conclusions, assumptions, interpretations, and differing points of view, and ultimately to develop common goals and action plans.

Dialogue is a collaborative skill that enables groups to improve the quality of their thinking and decisionmaking, while at the same time building relationships. To maintain those relationships the school must follow through on the group's decisions. According to Woods (2001):

In engaging the community, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and guardians, and even student participation, the development of ongoing two-way communication and the building of trust and mutual respect must be accepted as 'givens.' These two components help each constituent to trust that its feedback and contributions are valued, and to develop a sense of ownership in the school improvement process.

Dialogue can be formal or informal. It might consist of a single hour-long session, or it may extend to many sessions in the course of a year. Time for dialogue can be embedded in regularly scheduled meetings, before school, after school, in the evening, or as a part of professional development activities. Meetings can be weekly, monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly, taking place offsite at district

offices, nearby restaurants or homes, or in the library, faculty workrooms, or classrooms. When organizing for formal dialogue, refreshments should be arranged, and invitations and reminders sent to each participant with sufficient lead time to ensure good attendance. It is wise to provide participants with a summary of inventory results and some key discussion questions in advance, so the participants can come prepared to share insights and reflections. This will save briefing time about results at the dialogue session and allow the group to spend more time talking about the results and their implications for the school. However a school organizes the session, the reasons for dialogue remain to raise group awareness about topics or issues, achieve buy-in to the understanding gained, and garner support and involvement for goal-setting and follow-up actions that may be needed.

By design, the inventory's purpose is to spur a school to ask the question, "How can we build from where we are to help our American Indian and Alaska Native students succeed?" Success means that these students can take active, contributing roles in their chosen communities (tribal and/or mainstream).

The American Indian and Alaska Native practitioner panelists took drafts of the inventory back to their schools. They reported back the ways that they introduced or saw they could use the inventory in their own school settings:

- Chris Meyer met with a principal in her Idaho district. They determined that a suitable context for introducing the inventory would be the classroom teachers' "student achievement meetings."

- Claire Manning-Dick found the inventory was a good way to direct her school leaders toward specific school improvement goals for American Indian students because it "shows to school administrators the areas and how the school is doing in them."

- Arthur Ochoa introduced the inventory to his staff and commented that it assisted him in a practical way to "be more of a school leader than a school manager."

The inventory, he said, "has a vision" of what helps American Indian and Alaska Native students succeed. It gives him and his staff, he stated, "foundational information" to pursue his school's mission: Provide the best education possible.

Donna Houtz-McArthur conducted the inventory with a principal, a teacher, and an Indian parent group in her district. One key finding from their experience was that the tribal community lacked involvement at many levels at the school. The group moved from the inventory results to focus on discussing how "the school needs to listen to the tribal community and the community needs to feel it is heard, respected." The focus then moved to the work needed to address problems they identified around the issue of school-community communications.

As a result of this project, the practitioners on the panel respectfully set aside guidebook revisions based only on a view of schooling at the classroom level. Instead, they wanted a more all-encompassing tool, designed to take a broader view that included district leadership, the school infrastructure, and the school's stakeholders including students, families, tribal, and local communities. The inventory is designed for all schools entrusted with the education of American Indian and Native Alaskan students, not just reservation schools or schools in primarily Indian or Alaska Native communities. The panel practitioners wanted a tool situated in schoolwide improvement and in dialogue. They also wanted a recursive process. This inventory enables that to occur. A school may revisit the inventory to continue to improve.

If, indeed, as Joe Coburn indicated, there are "100 hard steps" to effective Indian education, a school community needs to take stock and determine where to focus its energies. It will want to talk and exchange views and ideas among its members, and to revisit whether they are traveling along—or straying from—the improvement path for American Indian and Alaska Native learners whose educational paths they steward.

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The lists provided here include sources that school staffs, parents, and community members can access for more indepth knowledge and tools for improving schools for American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Sources are listed by the inventory areas so users can find information more easily in areas they wish to know more about or their school is targeting. General resources and helpful Web sites follow at the end of the entire Resources section. Those who are interested in a specific inventory area should also be sure to check the Web site listings for sites that might apply to that area.

The resource listings are selective—literature on school improvement and the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students is large. Resources were chosen because of their direct relation to the inventory area topics and issues prompted by the indicators; because of their usefulness to a school community with diverse constituents; and because of their grounding in solid educational research and best practices. Many of the sources can lead to more studies through their footnotes and references lists if school community members desire even more indepth knowledge.

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Web Sites

Native Education Directory
AEL, Inc.
http://www.ael.org/eric/ned/
(Through keyword searching, you can access links to a variety of organizations, government programs, and publications. Produced in collaboration with the National Indian Education Association and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education & Small Schools.)

Alaska Native Knowledge Network
Alaska Federation of Natives/University of Alaska
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/
(The Alaska Native Knowledge Network is designed to serve as a resource for compiling and exchanging information related to Alaska Native knowledge systems and ways of knowing. It has been established to assist Native people, government agencies, educators, and the general public in gaining access to the knowledge base that Alaska Natives have acquired through cumulative experience over millennia.)

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools
Alaska Native Knowledge Network
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/
(These standards provide a basis against which schools can judge how well they are attending to the cultural well-being of the students in their care.)

Alaskool: Alaska Native Curriculum and Teacher Development Project
Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska, Anchorage
http://www.alaskool.org/
(The Alaska Native Curriculum and Teacher Development Project [ANCTD] brings together university-based specialists and teams of Alaska educators, elders, and community members to develop curricula on Alaska Native studies and language. Materials are then made available to all schools through the Internet or on CD. The project is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.)

American Indian Head Start Quality Improvement Center
American Indian Institute
College of Continuing Education
University of Oklahoma
http://www.aihsqic.ou.edu/
(The American Indian Head Start Quality Improvement Center is the primary training and technical assistance provider for American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs nationwide.)

American Indian Resources
(Maintained by Will Karkavelas, Osaka University)
http://jupiter.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/~krkvls/naindex.html
(This is an online library of Native American literature, culture, education, history, issues, and language that can provide access through links to many diverse resources beyond the site itself.)

Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), University of California, Santa Cruz
http://www.crede.ucsc.edu/
(CREDE's research and development focus is on critical issues in the education of linguistic and cultural minority students and those placed at risk by factors of race, poverty, and geographic location.)

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
National Network of Partnership Schools
Johns Hopkins University
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm
(The mission of this center is to conduct and disseminate research, development, and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help families, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.)

Cradleboard Teaching Project
http://www.cradleboard.org/
(This is a project of the Nihewan Foundation for American Indian education, which was founded by pop singer Buffy Sainte-Marie. It includes core curriculum based in Native American culture.)

Government Grants and Loans: American Indian Federal Money Retriever
http://www.fedmoney.com/grants/b0035.htm
(Here is a site that can lead a searcher through the federal tangle to programs granting significant sums that are applicable to American Indian and tribal people. Programs listed move beyond education to social services, medical, environmental, economic, and shelter needs.)

Impact of Facilities on Learning: Resource Lists
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/impact_learning.cfm
(The resource list will lead to many sources that can help answer questions about how physical spaces and spatial dynamics affect student learning. Some resources will include students' cultural/community backgrounds as important factors in school spaces.)

Indian EduResearch.Net
ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
http://www.indianeduresearch.net/
(This site provides tools for educational research and school development. Includes sources of data, information about research and funding, conference papers sharing current thinking, and bibliographies on topics related to improving schools and learning for American Indian and Alaska Native students.)

The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform
http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/about_cccsr/index.html
(This site is a central source for information about planning, implementing, and evaluating school reform programs. The clearinghouse partners—The George Washington University, the Council for Basic Education, and the Institute for Educational Leadership—provide assistance to schools and educators at all levels through many media products, workshops, and conferences.)

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF)
http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/community_use.cfm
(A free service created by the U.S. Department of Education and managed by the National Institute of Building Sciences. Provides information about K–12 school planning, design, financing, construction, operations, and maintenance. Includes a section that allows questions to NCEF staff.)

National Indian Education Association
http://www.niea.org/
(This is the Web site of the organization formed to give American Indians and Alaska Natives voice and control in efforts to improve educational opportunities for Native students. It actively tracks education-related legislation, provides information on the Office of Indian Education Programs and offers a section on Indian education research.)

National Indian School Board Association
http://www.skc.edu/NISBA
(NISBA's vision is to have empowered school board members, parents, and other stakeholders. The organization aims to support quality learning for Indian students and tribal cultural and economic needs. A holistic approach is advocated that acknowledges students as spiritual, intellectual, physical, and cultural beings within the contexts of families, tribes, and communities.)

National History Day
TheHistoryNet
http://history1900s.about.com/cs/historyday/
(National History Day is an exciting academic enrichment program, enabling middle and high school students to explore historical ideas, people, and events through projects that can accommodate diverse learning styles and cultural perspectives.)

National Museum of the American Indian
George Gustav Heye Center
http://www.nmai.si.edu/index.asp
(The Resource Center at NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center, New York, houses a library of approximately 5,000 books, and a collection of approximately 20 periodicals, including Native newspapers and publications, and maintains several information databases, as well as extensive audio and video collections.)

National Staff Development Council:
Links to other school improvement Web sites
http://www.nsdc.org/publinks.htm
(This education training organization offers links to many other education Web sites of use to parents or community members interested in school improvement issues.)

Native Book Centre
http://www.nativebooks.com/index.html
(The Native Book Centre has become one of the world's largest suppliers of Native and American Indian books, videos, audiocassettes, and CD-ROMs, with more than 1,500 titles in 37 different categories.)

Nihewan Foundation for Native American Education
http://www.nihewan.org/
(This is a small, private nonprofit foundation dedicated to improving the education of and about Native American people and cultures. Nihewan's focus is to help Native American students to participate in learning, while also helping people of all backgrounds learn about Native American culture.)

NW Topics: Indian Education
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.nwrel.org/comm/topics/indianed.html
(A collection of resources gathered by NWREL's Comprehensive Center Region X, which addresses the "culturally related academic needs" of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Good information on Title IX issues.)

Office of Indian Education Programs
Bureau of Indian Affairs
http://www.oiep.bia.edu/
(The mission of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs, is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with tribes' needs for cultural and economic well-being in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities.)

Oyate
http://www.oyate.org/
(The Oyate organization evaluates texts, resource materials, and fiction by and about Native peoples; conducts teacher workshops in which participants learn to evaluate children's material for anti-Indian biases; administers a small resource center and library; and distributes books and materials for children, young adults, and teachers, with an emphasis on writing and illustration by Native people.)

Parents as Teachers (PAT)
http://www.patnc.org/default.asp
(PAT is a national award-winning, nonprofit parent education and family support organization. Through a network of local programs, the Parents as Teachers National Center develops curriculum and trains and certifies parent educators to work with parents to provide support and information on their developing child.)

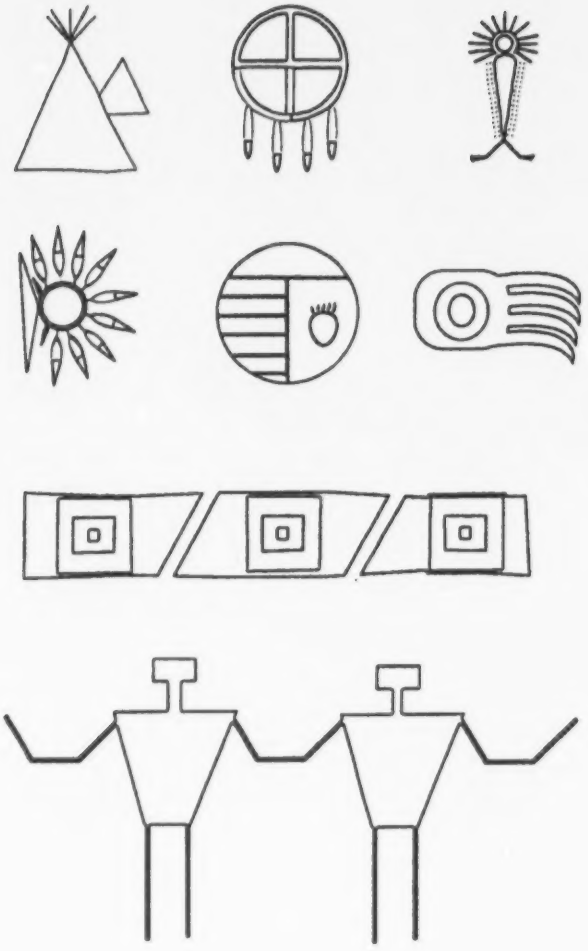
Search Institute: Development Assets
http://www.search-institute.org/assets/
(Search Institute developed the framework of developmental assets that identifies 40 critical factors for young people's growth and development. When drawn together, the assets offer a set of benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development.)

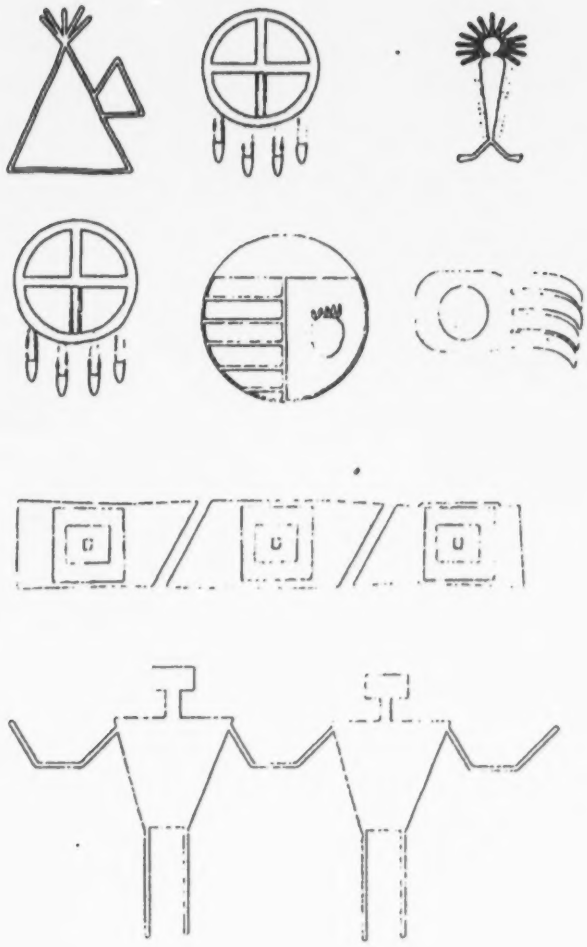
Skipping Stones: A Multicultural Magazine
http://www.efn.org/~skipping/
(*Skipping Stones* is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity, and celebration of cultural and environmental richness. Student writing is integral to the publication.)

21st Century Community Learning Centers Program
http://www.ncrel.org/21stcclc/index.html
(The 21st CCLCP was established by the U.S. Department of Education to award grants to rural and inner-city public schools for projects that address a variety of community needs. Program grants help schools stay open longer and provide safe places for extended learning.)

Notes

Notes





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